

A Place to Create (working title)

A strategic vision for creativity and culture in Lancaster District.

FOREWORD

Every year, Lancaster district's creative and cultural sector contributes £90 million to our local economy, employs over 2,200 people, and helps attract audiences and visitors in their hundreds of thousands to our historic city, our Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, breathtaking coastal areas around Morecambe Bay, and to our rural villages, countryside, towns and universities.

Our creative and cultural sector includes museums and historic sites, archaeology, public art and galleries, theatres, music and dance organisations, festivals, makers, and creative digital businesses. Together, they provide year-round activities helping support the local economy, contributing powerfully to our sense of place, adding meaning to and pride in where we live.

'Local culture is more than the sum of the outcomes it helps to support...culture is essential to the identity and aspiration of a place and its people.' (Local Government Association's 'Cornerstones of Culture' report December 2022.)

Our creative and cultural offer attracts and keeps talented people here. It engages and involves local people from many diverse local communities across the district. We believe that creativity and culture is central to our lives. It supports mental and social health, personal wellbeing, and resilience. It helps our ambition to create a sustainable environment by offering creative, powerful, and imaginative ways to explore the impact of climate change, helping people better understand the challenges we all face and the steps we need to take.

It's also very clear that there is much more to be achieved and we can work more effectively with others to drive this work forward. Whilst we've many strong creative and cultural assets, there's also a feeling that we can do more to punch above our weight and reach our full potential.

We want to strengthen the many partnerships we have and work harder to bring more investment into the district's creative and cultural economy. We want to ensure the sector plays its role in helping achieve a sustainable environment and create the chances for people in every local community to be creative and enjoy our cultural offer. We want to develop more home-grown talent and create local jobs and opportunities so that even more people want to stay and earn their living here. Finally, we want to significantly raise the district's profile regionally, nationally, and internationally to prominently position ourselves as a premier UK location for creativity and culture.

Although times are difficult for everyone right now, over the horizon, we see many exciting and ambitious projects taking shape.

We can now finally look forward to Eden Project Morecambe opening. The recent, hugely welcome announcement from the government of £50 million of Levelling Up Fund investment will undoubtedly attract additional support from others. Eden will bring hundreds of thousands of new visitors every year to the town and wider district, create jobs, and act as a powerful catalyst to stimulate more creative and cultural opportunities for local people and visitors. It has already put our district and the region beyond in the spotlight and we want to be ready to build on these opportunities.

Right across the road from Eden, the newly revived and restored Winter Gardens is being further improved to house its exciting year-round entertainment programmes. Exciting plans are evolving for the Morecambe Bay Triennial which will support cultural regeneration with a raft of new commissions, community engagement and festivals right around the Bay.

In Lancaster, the 1000-year-old, Grade 1 listed Castle, with its commanding views high above the city, and now beautifully refurbished, will continue to be an important historically significant site, hugely popular, attracting many thousands of visitors every year. The Castle is sited on a Roman Fort and archaeologists are busy exploring nearby Quay Meadow for the possibility of a Romano-Celtic temple being there. If true, it means it'll be only the second to be discovered in the whole of the North. New and existing creative and cultural businesses will benefit as a result of the Canal Quarter's regeneration and the city's Light Up Lancaster, Highest Point and Lancaster Music Festival remain highlights in the events calendar attracting thousands every year.

However, as is well known, Lancaster City Council, like everyone else, has many challenges to face, particularly financially. These have been influenced by national and global forces; the long legacy of Covid-19, the climate emergency, and the cost-of-living crisis which all impact on our local economy and daily lives.

The Council started a process, known as Outcomes Based Resourcing (OBR), to agree the outcomes we want to achieve, how to prioritise resources and work more effectively with partners, including with and for the creative and cultural sector and our communities. As part of this work, we've identified a suite of proposed high level creative and cultural outcomes, which align with the Council's priorities and fit with regional and national funding bodies' strategic ambitions. These will help guide how in the future we'll use our open spaces, buildings, time, and money.

We now also want to explore new models for how the Council might work even more closely with our many partners and stakeholders through a strong single strategic voice for creativity and culture. It would draw on the wealth of local and regional expertise across the creative and cultural, private business, tourism and hospitality, education and health, wellbeing, community, and voluntary sectors.

As a result of the recent data research and wide stakeholder consultation undertaken by Counterculture, [INSERT LINK TO SUMMARY REPORT](#) we now know far more about the nature and size of our creative and cultural economy. We have a robust evidence base, benchmarks and also the benefit of stakeholder input to inform our thinking. Many thanks

are due to Counterculture, and to all those from across a range of sectors who gave valuable time to share their extensive knowledge and experience. Thanks, are also due to the many people who came last November to the first of what will become regular meetings of the new Culture & Heritage Advisory Group.

Despite the undoubted challenges we face as a Council, **I/we (DEPENDS ON WHO IS SIGNING IT*)** are confidently looking forward to the exciting times which lie ahead for our creative and cultural district.

***TO BE SIGNED BY LEADER AND/OR PORTFOLIO HOLDER?**

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

THE EVIDENCE

- The district's creative industries sector, comprising arts, culture, media and creative service businesses – **employs around 2,200 people, with a direct gross value added output of approximately £61 million.** Adjusting that figure for 'multiplier' effects, **the total annual GVA contribution of the sector, direct, indirect and induced, is estimated to be £90 million.**
- Within the broader creative industries, **the district's cultural sector** - a narrower definition which excludes creative and digital services - **employs approximately 600 people, and has a direct gross value added output estimated at £14 million.** Again, adjusting for multiplier effects, **the total annual gross value-added contribution of this particular sector is estimated to be £27 million,** and this does not include many of the wider 'spill-over' benefits from arts participation and engagement, placemaking and tourism.
- **Between 2015 and 2020, local employment grew by approximately 25% in the creative industries sector and by 33% in the cultural sector** illustrating the attractiveness of the district to creative people.
- **In 2021-22, Lancaster City Council directly invested £1.346 million into local creative and cultural organisations and events which helped lever additional project and revenue funding from the Arts Council alone totalling £1.135 million.** This is in addition to other income received from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, ticket sales for events, sponsorship and grants from trusts and foundations, which is likely to be in the millions.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT, VISION AND OUTCOMES

- The Council will continue to align its work with national and regional policies and strategies and national funders' priorities, so we can work together to achieve joint objectives, benefit from their advice and expertise and help secure invaluable partnership funding for the district.

- The strategic context and Counterculture’s data research, plus feedback from its wide stakeholder consultation, has led us towards a suite of proposed outcomes which form a Strategic Vision aligned with the Council’s four Strategic Priorities:
 - A Sustainable District
 - An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy
 - Happy and Healthy Communities – which currently has related outcomes of *‘improving access to and involvement in arts, culture, leisure and recreation / supporting our thriving arts, culture and heritage sector.’*
 - A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council
- The proposed outcomes are:
 - **A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural profile.**
 - **Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways.**
 - **Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture.**
 - **Sharply focussed investment in local creative and cultural activity and talent.**
 - **A strong innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities and builds upon Lancaster’s strong national heritage profile.**
 - **Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity and culture and heritage across all our neighbourhood communities.**
 - **High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people.**
 - **The year-round delivery of a compelling creative, cultural and heritage offer for local people and visitors that supports the Visitor Economy and sustainable Local Wealth Building.**

A HIGH LEVEL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

- To achieve our proposed outcomes, we wish to explore the appetite, within the District, to establish a high level strategic partnership; ‘a strong single voice for creativity and culture’, comprising the creative and cultural sectors including heritage, the private sector, creative digital businesses, tourism, education, health and wellbeing, as well as the wider community and voluntary sectors which will be fully reflective of our diverse communities. Such a partnership would ensure that:
 - **Strategic leadership is joined up.**
 - **Local and inward investment is maximised.**
 - **The creative and cultural sector strongly contributes to a sustainable environment and local wealth building.**
 - **Local talent is developed and retained.**
 - **Pride in place & ‘cultural placemaking’ is promoted via a joined up offer.**

MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

- We will put in place new, ongoing, robust monitoring, analysis and evaluation programmes to show value for money, impact and need, help monitor performance, support funding bids and to inform future strategic reviews, planning and decision-making. We will also improve our evidence base to ensure we capture the economic and wider social 'non-monetised' outcomes and impacts.

TIMEFRAME

- We will phase our approach over short, medium and long terms coupled with interim review points:
 - **In the short term, 2023-25**, in the light of Council's ongoing OBR exercise and review of our services, we will plan for change in how we work and collaborate with the cultural and creative sectors to explore new models of strategic partnership working.
 - **Medium term 2025-27** sees the *possible* establishment of a new strategic partnership during 2025-26 and the review of our Creative & Cultural Investment Framework to inform our future funding decisions.
 - **Long term from 2027** Lancaster district will have firmly positioned itself as one of the UK's premier creative and cultural locations.
 - Towards the end of each term we will review, refresh and update our plans and strategies mindful of the Council's ongoing OBR framework to ensure we are on track and that we remain relevant to changing circumstances.

2. THE EVIDENCE

Nationally, creativity and culture is widely recognised as a significant part of this country's economy.

In 2019, the creative industries contributed **£115.9 billion to the UK. They accounted for 5.9% of the economy, and for 2.2 million jobs which grew at four times the rate of the rest of the economy prior to the pandemic.** (LGA 'Cornerstones of Culture' Report Dec 2022)

Public funding is an essential part of the ecology of arts and culture in the UK and **in 2020, for every £1 generated in arts and culture, an additional £1.23 gross value added** was generated in the wider economy. (LGA 'Cornerstones of Culture' Report Dec 2022)

Locally, Counterculture's research demonstrated that the district's **creative industries sector**-comprising arts, culture, media and creative service businesses – **employs around 2,200 people, with a direct gross value added output of approximately £61 million.** Adjusting that figure for 'multiplier' effects, **the total annual GVA contribution of the sector, direct, indirect and induced, is estimated to be £90 million.**

Within the broader creative industries, **the district's cultural sector - a narrower definition which excludes creative and digital services - employs approximately 600 people, and has a direct gross value added output estimated at £14 million.** Again, adjusting for multiplier effects, **the total annual gross value added contribution of this particular sector is estimated to be £27 million,** and this does not include many of the wider 'spill-over' benefits from arts participation and engagement, placemaking and tourism.

Against this background, in **2021-22 Lancaster City Council directly invested £1.346 million into local creative and cultural organisations and events which helped lever additional project and revenue funding from the Arts Council alone totalling £1.135 million.** This is in addition to other income received from the National Heritage Lottery Fund, ticket sales to events, sponsorship and from trusts and foundations, which is likely to be in the millions.

Counterculture also found that, **between 2015 and 2020, local employment grew by approximately 25% in the creative industries sector and by 33% in the cultural sector** illustrating the attractiveness of the district to creative people. **The concentration of employment in the creative industries in Lancaster is comparable with that of Lancashire as a whole, at 0.8% of the total population and 1.9% of people aged 16 – 64 in employment.** However, the district and Lancashire both lag behind the wider North West at 1.4% and 3.0% respectively, and England at 2.1% and 4.6%, so there is ground to make up.

Also, our district has the third largest creative industries sector in Lancashire after Chorley and Preston and has the fourth largest creative industries sector in the county relative to its population and workforce, but it has a higher concentration of film, TV, video, radio and photography than Lancashire as a whole.

By way of comparison with some other local authority areas elsewhere in the UK, **our district, at 1.9%, has a higher concentration of workers in the creative industries sector than does County Durham at 1.2%, but is lower than in Lincoln at 2.7% and significantly lower than Exeter which has 4.4%.** This would indicate that there is room for further growth given that Lincoln, Exeter and Lancaster are all historic cities with universities and broadly similar levels of population.

Counterculture identified over 200 'noteworthy cultural assets' in the district with a healthy representation of cultural venues, high-quality festivals and art in the public realm. But we also know that many venues and buildings need investment to upgrade through capital refurbishment and improvement. Importantly, **we also recognise that our 'assets' also include the 2,200 talented and skilled people who work in the sector here.**

In respect of audiences, Counterculture found that these are distinctly split between different parts of the district which broadly corresponds to relative levels of deprivation. They used the Audience Agency's Spectrum 'profiles' <https://www.theaudienceagency.org/audience-finder-data-tools/audience-spectrum>, to describe different cultural audience segments. **The most prominent in the district being middle to highly engaged groups such as 'Trips and Treats', 'Dormitory Dependables',**

‘Home and Heritage’ and ‘Experience Seekers’. Lancaster District has high engagement in the arts, according to Arts Council England.

This indicates a healthy appetite for cultural engagement amongst some in the community. But we also know that there is much work to be done to increase access to creative and cultural experiences for local people in *all* of our communities. Our district has many neighbourhoods suffering multiple deprivations. In 2013 for example, more than 20 Local Super Output Areas were in the most deprived 25% of the country. Seven areas were in the worst 5% nationally, with one in the most deprived 1% of all 32,468 areas in England. Whilst it's widely recognised that a growing creative and cultural offer provides life-enhancing opportunities for local people, from supporting social cohesion and pride of place, to building skills, broadening education and opening opportunities, not everyone, for a variety of reasons, engages and benefits or even feels creativity and culture is for them. We want that to change in our district.

Counterculture also believes there may still be post-Covid barriers to participation and engagement due to people's previous, pre-Covid disinterest in arts, culture and heritage now coupled with lower levels of engagement and higher levels of reluctance to returning to live events in the North West when compared to the UK overall.

All the above should be seen in the wider context of **the district's strong tourism economy, which in Lancashire is second only to Blackpool. In 2017, STEAM data from Visit Lancashire shows that there were 7.54 million tourism visits to the district delivering an economic impact of £476.54 million. By 2019, this had risen to 7.74 million visits with an impact of £492.33 million. Despite the adverse impact of the pandemic in 2020 which saw a fall to 2.55 million visits and an economic impact down to £192.13 million, the district showed a strong and resilient recovery in 2021 with 4.96 million visits and an economic impact of £363.22 million.**

Our overall tourism offer, including creative and cultural events and festivals is diverse, and these elements clearly contribute to the overall mix. Given the current underlying strength of the broad visitor economy, plus the anticipated significant increase in visitor numbers that Eden will attract, there is great potential for the sector, and the wider economy, to benefit further from these visitors and potential cultural audiences if, as Counterculture's stakeholder interviews strongly suggested, there is also *'a more compelling creative & cultural offer'* available.

Much of the evidence above is related to economic performance and we are aware that creativity and culture also contributes to many non-economic outcomes and impacts which in the future we will monitor and evaluate at a district level. In section 6.1, we outline our approach to being in a far better position to measure social value and impact in the future.

3. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Where it makes sense, the Council will continue to align its work with national and regional partners to achieve joint objectives, benefit from their advice and expertise and to help secure partnership funding.

In particular, these include Arts Council England whose ten year strategy *Let's Create*: <https://www.artscouncil.org.uk/lets-create> states the following which also reflects our beliefs:

'Culture and the experiences it offers can have a deep and lasting effect on places and the people who live in them. Investment in cultural activities and in arts organisations, museums and libraries helps improve lives, regenerate neighbourhoods, support local economies, attract visitors and bring people together.'

The Arts Council has three key Outcomes it seeks to achieve:

Creative People: *Everyone can develop and express creativity throughout their life.*

Cultural Communities: *Villages, towns and cities thrive through a collaborative approach to culture.*

A Creative and Cultural Country: *England's cultural sector is innovative, collaborative and international.*

Our proposed outcomes closely fit these, and we know the Arts Council already supports several innovative and exciting organisations and events here. A key priority for the Council is to achieve a Sustainable District, and 'Environmental Responsibility' is one of the Arts Council's 2023-26 Investment Principles which The Dukes, More Music, Imitating the Dog and Lancaster Arts, all in the Arts Council's National Portfolio from April, will be required to deliver against.

The Arts Council's ambition in this vitally important area is for:

'...the organisations and individuals we support to forefront their commitment to environmental responsibility through considered planning and actions. We expect this to result in continued carbon reductions and to also highlight the potential of culture to connect, mobilise and inspire places and communities, and champion cultural leadership.'

This ambition aligns fully with the Council's priority. Our proposed outcomes include that all organisations, whether they are in the Arts Council's National Portfolio or not, events and initiatives in receipt of Council investment or support, as well as the Council's own services and initiatives, will similarly be expected to demonstrate a strong and clear commitment to environmental responsibility.

The National Lottery Heritage Fund, another of our key funding partner's, Strategic Funding Framework

<https://www.heritagefund.org.uk/sites/default/files/media/attachments/Heritage%20Fund%20-%20Strategic%20Funding%20Framework%202019-2024.pdf> aims to support heritage projects that create better places to live, work and visit, have a 'sense of place' that inspires local pride and increases wellbeing. As with the Arts Council, our core priorities, and our proposed outcomes align with those of the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

Our overall approach also reflects key points in the Local Government Association's recent 'Cornerstones of Culture' Report (December 2022) <https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/culture-tourism-leisure-and-sport/cornerstones-culture> mentioned earlier, which stated that:

'local culture is more than the sum of the outcomes it helps to support...culture is essential to the identity and aspiration of a place and its people.'

Similarly, The Department of Culture Media and Sports Select Committee's 'Re-imagining where we live report' (October 2022)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/31429/documents/176244/default/> reflects our thinking: said,

"Cultural placemaking", which refers to the role of arts, culture and heritage in shaping the places where we live, is an important concept in the context of Levelling Up. Place-based approaches to culture can be locally-led and engaging, deliver direct and indirect benefits and support education, pride in place, health and wellbeing.'

As with the national funding bodies, our Strategic Vision and proposed outcomes echo the Northern Local Enterprise Partnerships - NPII's A Place Strategy for the North

https://www.np11.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/FINAL-NP11_PlaceStrategy.pdf which stated that,

'The arts, heritage, cultural and environmental assets of the North are intrinsic to developing the northern economy and to supporting economic recovery and growth. The UK cannot have a truly successful economy without a strong cultural sector...which in turn play(s) a vital role in regenerating places, provide(s) a voice and identity to its cities, towns, and villages, and contribute(s) to biodiversity and sustainability to build our resistance to climate change.'

Lancashire Enterprise Partnership's 'Remade: A cultural investment strategy for Lancashire (May 2022) <https://www.creativelancashire.org/app/creativelancs/files-module/local/library/LEP%20Cultural%20Strategy%20TFCC%20v10%20June%202020%20FINAL%20DRAFT%20.pdf> identified five outcomes:

- **Increased Connectivity:** A better connected cultural and creative sector
- **Enhanced Capacity:** A stronger, more diverse, sustainable and appropriately skilled cultural sector

- **Improved Crossovers:** *An international reputation for the strength, depth and ingenuity of our partnerships and collaborations.*
- **Bolder Commissioning and Innovative Infrastructure:** *National and international recognition for the strength of our connected cultural and creative infrastructure, and for delivering high quality work to diverse audiences.*
- **Compelling Cultural Narratives:** *National and international recognition for the distinctiveness of our places, people and environment.*

Many of our proposed outcomes clearly link with ‘Remade’. We see great potential to continue to work alongside our Lancashire partners in the years ahead. We welcome the strong support for Eden which greatly benefitted from invaluable feasibility funding, and also for the re-development of Lancaster’s Canal Quarter, which proposes a new mixed use development with creative and cultural opportunities complementing the nearby Fraser House Co-working space & Tech Hub at Whitecross whose development was also supported by Lancashire County Council.

Geographically, the district is home to the largest concentration of arts organisations between Merseyside and Greater Manchester to the South and Scotland to the North. Of the nine Arts Council National Portfolio Organisations in Lancashire, four are located here and Counterculture noted that the district,

‘...has a strong cultural offer which has the potential to grow to national significance. It is a day at the seaside, a gateway to the lakes, railway heritage, castles, canals, and the coast. It has a deep pool of talent from musicians to visual artists, events coordinators, and much more in between.’

Finally, international economic consultants Hatch <https://www.hatch.com/About-Us/About-the-Company> were commissioned by the Council to prepare the *Lancaster Prosperity and Resilience Strategy* which highlights that:

‘Recognising these (arts and cultural) assets in providing an attractive quality of life offer and continuing to invest in growing its arts, cultural and leisure scene will help support growth in Lancaster’s economy by creating a thriving location that people want to live, work in and visit.’

All in all, the district’s sector and the Council’s proposed outcomes are well placed to contribute to, and benefit from the priorities and ambitions of our many strategic partners, locally, regionally and nationally.

4. STRATEGIC VISION & PARTNERSHIP

The strategic context above and Counterculture’s research, has led us towards a suite of outcomes which form a Strategic Vision:

- **A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural profile.**

- **Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways.**
- **Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture.**
- **Sharply focussed investment in local creative, cultural and heritage activity and talent.**
- **A strong innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities and builds upon Lancaster’s strong national heritage offer to support the Visitor Economy.**
- **Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity, culture, and heritage across all our neighbourhood communities.**
- **High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people.**
- **The year-round delivery of a compelling creative, cultural and heritage offer for local people and visitors.**

To help realise this vision, and most importantly by working closely with our partners from within the creative and cultural sectors, and other relevant bodies, we wish to explore the potential appetite, within the District, to establish a high level strategic partnership which will be reflective of our diverse communities, comprising the creative and cultural sectors including heritage, the private sector, creative digital businesses, tourism, education, health and wellbeing, as well as the wider community and voluntary sectors.

There are many such partnerships across the country, and we will look at different models, examples of best practice and hear about the lessons learned by others, so that, in the event such a body is to be created here, it will be directly relevant to our district and our needs, vision and ambition.

The Council will be a key partner and facilitate its establishment. The partnership will be an accountable ‘strong single strategic voice for creativity and culture’, importantly promoting dialogue and collaboration to help better link the creative and cultural sectors with wider local agendas for mutual benefit.

Such an approach would chime with proposals for ‘Cultural Compacts’ made in 2019 in the UK Cultural Cities Enquiry

<https://www.corecities.com/sites/default/files/field/attachment/Cultural%20Cities%20Enquiry%20%5Bweb%5D.pdf> - which stated that such bodies would be a

“locally determined strategic partnership to create ‘whole place leadership’ for culture. It is designed to create a sustainable local framework to replicate the impact of a major cultural programme. It will significantly raise levels of ambition and align investment and resources toward shared priorities.”

and the Local Government Association’s ‘Cornerstones of Culture’ Report, already mentioned, stated:

'What will need to change...is the way in which we collaborate ...no single organisation now has the funding, staff time or skills to do this alone. So councils, cultural organisations, and our partners in central government will need to keeping working together to support each place to be the most vibrant, best place it can possibly be.'

and

'Collaboration with the wider cultural sector, business and enterprise, and national and regional partners is essential if we are to safeguard the services that mean so much to our communities.'

In recent years, we worked in close partnership with our neighbour local authorities, South Lakeland and Barrow to explore the possibility of establishing a 'Bay Cultural Compact'. Whilst it was decided not to progress that work, due to local government re-organisation, many positive ideas about new ways of working emerged through that process which could help inform and be further explored for potential application at a local level in our district.

Such a partnership, if established, could provide:

- **JOINED UP STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP** by having in place the right partners, at the right levels, with a deep knowledge of the district coupled with the expertise, energy and commitment to formulate a robust business plan underpinning the delivery of a shared vision. It will be responsible for developing, advocating and implementing the business and strategic plans to achieve valuable positive outcomes and impacts meeting the needs and aspirations of local people and their communities.

A strategic partnership would assist with the delivery of the strategic vision set out in this document in the following ways:

- **MAXIMISING LOCAL AND INWARD INVESTMENT** over the long term, into the creative and cultural sector, for both core revenue and capital purposes through a coherent joined-up, 'single voice' approach to major bids for public funding or for infrastructure development such as digital capacity and connectivity. It would help to lever private and public investment, partnership funding, sponsorship and philanthropy from as wide a range of local, regional, national and international sources be they central government or local authorities, the Local Enterprise Partnership, major trusts and foundations and bodies such as the Arts Council, Historic England and National Lottery Heritage Fund. Care would be taken to ensure that any major funding applications, complemented rather than competed with bids to such sources from local creative and cultural organisations.

- **ENSURING THAT THE CREATIVE AND CULTURAL SECTOR STRONGLY CONTRIBUTES TO A SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENT** - creativity and culture are powerful tools which can help inspire, inform and educate people, raise awareness and promote the need to tackle climate change. By working in partnership with others, encouraging and supporting innovative approaches to environmentally sustainable creative and cultural production, presentation and consumption, support for the creative and cultural sectors' activities and future development, helps address the climate emergency and can support the path to net carbon zero and enhanced bio-diversity.
- **TALENT DEVELOPMENT AND RETENTION** by creating and nurturing a diverse talent pool and pipelines to grow local and attract external talent. By working with local colleges and regional and national bodies such as Lancashire Skills and Employment Hub and Creative & Cultural Skills, supporting education, skills and training providers, creative and cultural organisations and local businesses would provide effective work experience, formal and informal, as well as employment and professional development opportunities. This is most important for our young people from historically under-represented sectors of our communities to secure work, earn a living and realise their ambitions within the creative and cultural industries and other sectors.
- **PROMOTING PRIDE IN PLACE & CULTURAL PLACEMAKING** by helping develop and capitalise on our many creative, cultural and related assets, human and physical. Critically, by joining with other sectors, local communities, business and tourism bodies, we can further promote the district as a distinctively different, creative, bold and ambitious place with vibrant, creatively animated high streets and public spaces. Local people will feel a vital part of where they live, fully involved in helping nurture a powerful sense of pride, and our many visitors will delight in coming here and leave eager to return.

Given the current and likely continuation of severe pressures on public and other funding for creativity and culture, such a partnership would need to closely align its work with local, regional and national strategies as outlined earlier. This will ensure we can swiftly, proactively and successfully respond to major funding opportunities and initiatives as they emerge from national funding bodies and/or central government – many often at very short notice – so we can successfully secure resources to support activities, seize chances, and underpin the longer term economic and environmental sustainability of the sector.

It will ensure the district's voice is listened to, and that our creative and cultural sector can demonstrate its ability to fully contribute to and benefit from wider strategic initiatives across the public sphere beyond itself e.g. in health, education, and the environment. The partnership would of course work closely with the Council itself, so that culture and creativity is embedded across the latter's economic, planning, growth, regeneration and environmental policies and strategies.

5. A CHANGED ROLE FOR THE COUNCIL

Currently, the roles the Council carries out include:

- Enabler and facilitator of others' programmes such as music festivals, Vintage by the Sea.
- Creative (co-)producer and/or direct deliverer for example, Light Up Lancaster.
- Venue operator of The Platform and our 4 nationally Accredited Museums.
- Festival and event project management.
- Direct funder and co-funder of the district's cultural organisations.
- Advocating the district's offer to the Arts Council, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Historic England amongst others and also more widely to non-arts sectors such as health, education and government.
- Ensuring the creative and cultural sectors and our activities contribute to place-making and destination marketing.
- Provision of advice to the sector.
- Licencing.
- Hire and management of spaces for cultural events.

As the Council itself, through the OBR process, changes to a more strategic role, we will also re-imagine and explore how we can best work most effectively and collaboratively with, and contribute to, a possible new strategic 'joined up' approach with others to creative and cultural development and delivery.

We also want, as stakeholder feedback to Counterculture suggested, to create '*a space for dreams*'. So, we will build on the success of the inaugural meeting held in November 2022 of the Council's Culture & Heritage Advisory Group and work with Lancaster Arts Partnership and other groupings and organisations ensuring that the creative, cultural and other related sectors, like tourism and hospitality continue to inform our thinking and plans and feed into the work of the proposed higher level strategic partnership.

6. PROPOSED CREATIVE AND CULTURAL OUTCOMES

The Council currently has in place four strategic priorities to 2030

<https://www.lancaster.gov.uk/the-council-and-democracy/about-the-council/corporate-plan> :

- A Sustainable District
- An Inclusive and Prosperous Local Economy
- Happy and Healthy Communities – which also has related outcomes of '*improving access to and involvement in arts, culture, leisure and recreation / supporting our thriving arts, culture and heritage sector.*'
- A Co-operative, Kind and Responsible Council

to which the following suite of proposed creative and cultural outcomes would be aligned:

- **A significantly raised national and international creative and cultural profile** than is the case currently, benefitting particularly from the huge impact of Eden Project Morecambe as a unique, world class cultural institution at the heart of our district.
- **Strong commitment by the creative and cultural sector to environmental responsibility and net zero carbon pathways** by both the district's creative and cultural sector, and the Council's own cultural activities and initiatives, demonstrating inspiring and positive change through action, initiatives and individual organisations' strategies, projects and events.
- **Maximised local and inward investment for creativity and culture** from public, private, trusts, foundations and other sources.
- **Sharply focussed investment in local creative and cultural activity and talent** ensuring they contribute to the economic success of our re-imagined high streets, town centres and rural areas as well as the district's overall health and wellbeing.
- **A strong and innovative heritage offer which reflects the diverse histories of our communities** that continues to attract visitors to the district's historic city and towns and builds local wealth.
- **Broad, deep engagement, participation and inclusion in creativity and culture across all our neighbourhood communities**, particularly in those areas where access and engagement is low, particularly amongst young people and groups currently under-represented, be that as a result of class, age, health, race or disability, and particularly from amongst those areas 'in greatest need'.
- **High quality professional and skills development of local people, particularly of young people** through close working with the creative, cultural and digital sectors and training providers.
- **The year round delivery of a compelling creative & cultural offer** through the presentation, and energetic marketing, of amongst other things a 'distinctively different' collaboratively curated programme of high impact, high quality open air festivals, events and innovative world class 'art in the public realm'.

6.1 MONITORING, ANALYSIS AND EVALUATION

We will put in place new, ongoing, robust monitoring, analysis and evaluation programmes to show value for money, impact and need, help monitor performance, support funding bids and to inform future strategic reviews, planning and decision-making. We will improve our evidence base to ensure we capture the economic and wider social 'non-monetised' outcomes and impacts, such as on the environment, community, health and wellbeing and education and to monitor people's access to creativity and culture.

Such information is vital if we want to know if we're on track to achieve our outcomes, to understand all our impacts and be in a position to make compelling business cases for external, often very competitive, funding or when putting together 'pitches' for major arts and cultural events and 'designations', either on our own or in collaboration with others. It would also be a valuable resource helping support the district's individual creative and cultural organisations when they're preparing their own bids.

It would help show value for money, impact and need to funders and partners, including to the Council itself, help monitor performance, inform future strategic reviews, planning and decision-making. To achieve this we would build on Counterculture's recent research to secure external funding and support from funding bodies, and agencies like the UK Research & Innovation and Arts & Humanities Research Council to establish such programmes. We would also explore the potential for working with independent research bodies and specialist consultancies, and / or possibly with our universities to advise us about relevant standards and appropriate methods.

7. TIMEFRAME - SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM

We live in a rapidly changing world. As recent global events have shown only too well strategies and plans must evolve and adapt to changing circumstances. As mentioned, the Council itself is changing, so, we'll be phasing our approach over short, medium and long terms with built-in strategic review points mindful of the Council's ongoing OBR framework.

- **In the short term, 2023-25**, the Council, like others, will have less resources available to it. We face economic challenges, and in the light of the OBR exercise, and review of our services, we'll plan for change in how we work and collaborate with the cultural and creative sectors to explore new models of strategic partnership working.

Autumn 2024: first strategic review, refresh and update point.

- **Medium term 2025-27** sees the possible establishment of a new strategic partnership during 2025-26, maximising the district's 'inward' investment potential and we'll also review our Creative & Cultural Investment Framework to help inform future funding decisions. This will help deliver our proposed outcomes and support events and initiatives with greater impact to raise the district's 'game' and national and international profile. Importantly, it will help us seize the opportunities that the massive increase in visitors that Eden will bring to Morecambe and the wider district, so that these visitors will be encouraged to spend even more of their time and money here and to make return visits.

Autumn 2026: second strategic review, refresh and update point.

- **Long term from 2027** imagines what might be ‘over the horizon’; Eden is attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors every year to its awe-inspiring iconic pavilions; Morecambe Bay Triennial is presenting spectacular new commissions along the coast; vibrant creative and cultural businesses are thriving in Lancaster’s regenerated Canal Quarter; the Castle continues to draw thousands through its gates; our museums’ and galleries’ visitors, and theatres’ and festivals’ audiences are booming and the Winter Gardens’ newly expanded programme is playing to packed houses – the creativity and culture of our district is all year round making a huge difference to all our lives.

8. SUMMARY

Over recent months, the Council, through its OBR process has started the process of taking an in-depth look at what, how and why it does things. At the same time, we’ve worked with consultants to gain a deeper understanding of our creative and cultural sectors through data and by listening to our stakeholders.

Despite the undoubted challenges we face, the Council firmly believes that creativity and culture is absolutely vital to this district’s future and that the approach we have outlined here, and the many exciting plans and ideas the sector is developing, will position us as one of the UK’s premier creative and cultural locations – a place in which we can all dream and imagine!

This document is a starting point. We hope you find it a helpful contribution to our collective thinking in the years ahead.

END